

Recent Washington State ADULT Findings

BACKGROUND / SIGNIFICANCE

Smoking rates among Washington adults have been relatively stable throughout the 1990's, well above 20 percent until recently. Since the robust implementation of the Tobacco Prevention and Control program in the Fall of 2000, these stagnant rates have begun a persistent decreasing trend. Most recently, the story released to the press was simply the abridged edition to an extensive analysis that explored these unprecedented observed declines. In the end, the press release summed up these results as "130,000 fewer adult smokers" and "ninth lowest smoking rate in the nation."

What follows are the unabridged contents of the detailed exploration into the declines in the Washington adult smoking rates. Trends are explored by gender, age, education, income, race/ethnicity, and urban/rural location.

METHODS

Surveys: Washington State has used the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to consistently measure smoking rates over time. In year 2003, the Washington Tobacco Prevention and Control program contributed to the capacity of the survey and increased the size of the survey by 6-fold. These more robust data enabled more detailed analysis than preceding years. For data prior to 2003, years were combined to produce more stable estimates.

Sample: Statewide RDD telephone survey, English and Spanish (starting in 2003)

Response rate: 40-50%

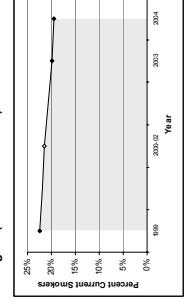
Limitations: Includes only non-institutionalized residents of Washington. Since survey is only offered in two languages, there are many other Washington residents not eligible for the survey because of language barriers. All respondents in the analysis are English speakers only, since the prior years to 2003 we only offered in this language.

RESULTS

Overall smoking prevalence among all adults
Since implementation of the state's comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, current use of cigarettes has decreased by approximately 13% among smokers from 1999 to 2004, as measured by the BRFSS (Figure 1). Among the total Washington population, there was a 29% decrease between both years. The prevalence in 1999 right before the program started was 22.4% ($\pm 1.6\%$) and the prevalence measured after four complete years of comprehensive program implementation was 19.5% ($\pm 0.8\%$) in 2004. This difference is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

National Comparison

While there are no directly comparable national data, the national data available indicate that smoking rates among adults in the United States - while relatively stable through the late 1990's - have also begun to decline in recent years. Although no direct comparisons can be made to the nation, we are able to talk about Washington's progression in state-by-state ranking of overall lowest smoking since the program began. In a state-by-state ranking, Washington has moved from a ranking of 20th in 1999 to 9th in 2004 in overall lowest smoking prevalence.



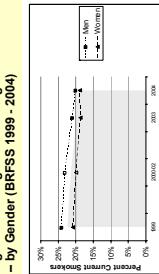
Changes by Gender

In general, smoking rates are higher among men than women. In Washington, smoking rates are also higher among men than women although not statistically significant.

Changes from 1999 to 2004: Smoking prevalence among men has significantly decreased from 24.0% (± 2.6) in 1999 to 20.0% (± 1.2) in 2004. Although smoking prevalence decreased for women as well, from 20.0% (± 2.2) in 1999 to 18.9% (± 0.9) in 2004, this decrease was not statistically significant.

Trends from 1999 to 2004: Smoking prevalence among men has shown a significant decreasing trend since 1999. Smoking prevalence among women has shown a decreasing trend since 1999, although non-significant (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Changes in Smoking - by Gender (BRFSS 1999 - 2004)



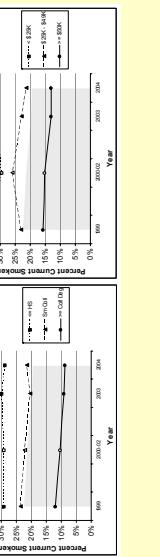
Changes by Socio Economic Status (Education and Income)

In general, smoking rates are highest among people of a lower socio-economic status - lower education and income. In Washington, smoking rates are significantly higher among people with a high school education or less as compared to those with some or more college. Likewise, smoking rates are also significantly higher among lower income adults as compared to highest income adults.

Changes from 1999 to 2004: Reductions were seen among adults with more than a high school education between 1999 and 2004, but not among adults with high school education or less. The reductions among most educated people were statistically significant.

Trends from 1999 to 2004: Decreasing trends have been observed among adults with some college or more. The greatest decreasing trend was seen among those with a college degree or more. A statistically significant decreasing trend was only detected among those with a college degree or more (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Changes in Smoking - by Education (BRFSS 1999 - 2004)



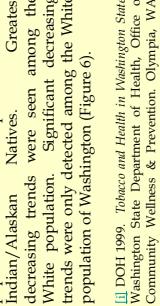
Changes by Race/Ethnicity

In general, smoking rates are dramatically different by race and ethnicity. In Washington, smoking rates are significantly higher among African Americans and Indians/Alaska Natives as compared to whites.

Changes from 1999 to 2004: Statistically significant decreases in smoking prevalence since the program began were only seen among White people in Washington. Decreases among other racial/ethnic groups were seen although none were statistically significant. Data prior to program implementation in Figure 6 are similar to estimates reported in 1999 in "Tobacco and Health in Washington State".

Changes from 1999 to 2004: There were statistically significant declines in smoking prevalence among adults living in both urban and rural areas between 1999 and 2004.

Figure 5: Changes in Smoking - by Race/Ethnicity (BRFSS 1999 - 2004)



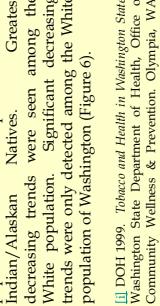
Changes by Urban / Rural Setting

In general, smoking rates can and sometimes do vary. In Washington, smoking rates are not different according urban versus rural location. NOTE: Examination of changes in smoking prevalence by geography was conducted by categorizing survey participants into either urban or rural categories based on the zip code of their residence. Urban was classified as those living in urban or suburban areas (such as Seattle and Yakima) and rural was classified as those living in large towns, small towns or remote areas (such as Ephrata and Forks).

Changes from 1999 to 2004: Trends from 1999 to 2004: There were statistically significant declines in smoking prevalence among White people in Washington. Decreases among other racial/ethnic groups were seen although none were statistically significant. Data prior to program implementation in Figure 6 are similar to estimates reported in 1999 in "Tobacco and Health in Washington State".

Changes from 1999 to 2004: Trends from 1999 to 2004: Decreasing trends were seen among all racial/ethnic groups with the exception of American Indian/Alaskan Natives.

Figure 6: Current Smoking Prevalence - by Race/Ethnicity (BRFSS 1999-1998 through 2004)



CONCLUSIONS

In summary, Washington remains on target to reduce smoking prevalence to 16.5% by year 2010, with a prevalence of 19.5% in 2004 v. 22.4% in 1999 (baseline year). Between 1999 and 2004, smoking prevalence has significantly decreased among adult men, Whites, adults ages 30 and older, with more than high school education, with the highest income population, and among adults living in both urban and rural areas. The insight into trends by certain subgroups has informed the program as to potential areas of concern and focus in the impending years.

